[redacted] NID 81[redacted]

January 12, 1981

SPECIAL ANALYSIS

USSR-POLAND: Moscow's Position

[redacted]

The situation in Poland is again pointing to a possible confrontation between the workers and the regime following a short-lived period of calm during the holiday season. [redacted]

Solidarity's successful work action on Saturday has renewed pressure on the regime for a five-day workweek. Farmers and students continue to demand concessions, and the Polish party still commands little authority. [redacted]

Developments within the Polish party may be the key to any Soviet decision to renew military pressure against the Kania regime. The Soviets can live with a certain amount of difference over economic issues. Moscow's level of tolerance, however, will certainly diminish if Kania cannot restore internal party discipline before the Polish Party Congress in late March or early April, check the demand for greater democracy within the party, and preserve the regime's internal control systems, including censorship. [redacted]

The Soviets clearly want the Polish party to prevent additional strikes and resist escalating demands from the unions and the dissidents, although specific guidelines may not have been defined at the Warsaw Pact summit in Moscow on 5 December. Capitulation to political demands of the workers will probably be read by Moscow as evidence that Kania is losing ground in his struggle against the unions. [redacted]

Soviet Military Threat

The prospect of Soviet military intervention had a sobering impact on the key Polish actors last month. The Polish party and military stepped up their media attacks on dissident groups, particularly those connected with Solidarity. The Church, meanwhile, demonstrated a

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clearer involvement on the side of restraint than it had earlier. Solidarity moderated its demands and endorsed a moratorium on strike activity. [redacted]

How often the Soviets can profitably threaten force without actually using it, however, seems likely to become an increasingly vexing question for the Kremlin. An indefinite continuation of a threatening posture would complicate other Soviet policy interests and serve to raise the level of Western response to the Polish crisis. Over time, the coercive value of Moscow's military signals will erode as the Soviets fail to follow up on their threat of intervention. [redacted]

The Costs of Inaction

Solidarity has already achieved a status in Poland that hardliners in the Soviet Politburo probably deem unacceptable. KGB chief Andropov, chief ideologist Suslov, and Minister of Agriculture Gorbachev reportedly believe that the situation in Poland has been allowed to develop too far and that Soviet intervention is the only answer. [redacted]

That Moscow has not intervened yet is primarily due to the recognition by President Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders of the enormous political, economic, and strategic costs of such a move. This recognition may cause the Soviets--barring a dramatic turn of events in Poland--to delay a decision on more forceful action until after the Soviet Party Congress in late February. [redacted]

An awareness of the costs will continue to condition Soviet behavior. If the Polish party can at least avoid a repetition of the events of November, Moscow may find itself reluctantly accepting the status quo for some time. [redacted]

Continued Soviet forbearance, however, risks permitting--if not encouraging--the further strengthening of Solidarity and weakening of the party. The resumption of active opposition to the Polish regime by Solidarity probably is bolstering the hand of those in the

Soviet Politburo who are arguing that the longer Moscow waits the costlier an ultimate solution will be. [redacted]

Intervention

Having already increased their military preparedness, the Soviets will be in a better position to opt for the introduction of military forces at the next critical juncture. Although most of the Soviet forces have returned to a peacetime readiness posture, Moscow's recent experience in mobilizing and training elements of a potential invasion force leaves them capable of responding quickly. [redacted]

We believe they could [redacted] intervene with a Warsaw Pact force of about 20 divisions within approximately a week. With a substantially smaller force of some half dozen divisions, it would take only two to three days. [redacted]